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3 Administrations Backed CIA on NSA, Kennedy Says

By United Press International

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., whose familiarity with the Central Intelligence Agency goes back to the Bay of Pigs fiasco, said today it was unfair to make the CIA "take the rap" for secretly subsidizing private organizations.

The former attorney general, brother of the late President, voiced sympathy for the CIA, buffeted in a wave of protest reaction to the disclosure that it had channeled money through various foundations to student and other organizations with international activities.

With a rueful grin about "getting into another controversy," the senator said in an interview:

"These basic decisions were not made unilaterally by the CIA but by the executive branch—in the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations. All relevant government agencies are contacted for their approval. That includes the White House.

'Not in a Dream World'

"If the policy was wrong, it was not the product of the CIA but of each administration."

"We must not forget that we are not dealing with a dream world, but with a very tough adversary," he continued.

"I think it is unfair that the CIA should take the rap on this. Any of these decisions made by

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CIA had to have been approved by others."

Kennedy called the CIA an "invaluable organization."

"It performs many useful functions to protect the security of the country. It has some of the most able, dedicated public servants in the government."

He said he did not wish to discuss specific cases of CIA involvement and had no ready answer as to how financial support of private international activities helpful to the nation should best be handled.

While Kennedy voiced sympathy for the CIA, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey said he was "not at all happy" with the CIA's covert support of the National Student Association and other groups.

Humphrey told students at Stanford University that the CIA's infiltration into the collegiate group was "one of the saddest times our government has had in terms of public policy."

"I'm not all happy about what the CIA is doing," Humphrey said. "I regret that the CIA was involved in this. I think we ought to keep our democratic institutions free of government coercion."

He said the CIA needs "closer supervision" and should be "confined to its intelligence-gathering activities."

Humphrey's comment followed similar criticism in a statement issued by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who is a member of a panel President

Johnson appointed last week to review CIA activities such as the NSA program.

Gardner said it was "a mistake for the CIA ever to entangle itself in covert activities close to the field of education or scholarship or the university."

But he stressed that he felt the error should not weigh against recognizing the nation's need for an intelligence-gathering agency.

Gardner said he has "little respect for critics who give themselves airs of moral superiority in attacking an activity they know to be necessary."

CIA director Richard Helms, another member of the review panel, briefs members of Senate Armed Services subcommittee today.

Mansfield Urges Probe

One member of the subcommittee, Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield, has said the CIA link to the collegiate group smacked of "big brotherism" and should be fully investigated by the group.

Sen. Milton R. Young, R-N.D., ranking Republican of the special watchdog subcommittee on the CIA, defended the agency. He told the Senate "we need the CIA and badly" to compete with Russian espionage.

Rep. Wayne Hays, D-Ohio charged in a House speech that the White House and State Department knowingly allowed the CIA subsidies to the NSA which amounted in some years to \$400,000.

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